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POEMS

ON

MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS,

BY

FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS.

TENTH THOUSAND.

PHILADELPHIA:
MERRIHEW & THOMPSON, PRINTERS,
Lodge street, North side Pennsylvania Bank.
1857.

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PREFACE.

Of the colored population of the United States, three millions are doomed to the horrible condition of chattel slavery. That condition is the annihilation of manhood, the extinction of genius, the burial of mind. In it, therefore, there can be no progress on the part of its victims; what they are capable of being and doing can be only a matter of supposition. It is unlawful to teach them the alphabet; they not only have no literature, but they know not the meaning of the word; for them there is no hope, and therefore no incentive to a higher development; in one word, they are property to be owned, not persons to be protected.

There are half a million free colored persons in our country. These are not admitted to equal rights and privileges with the whites. As a body, their means of education are extremely limited; they are oppressed on every hand; they are confined to the performance of the most menial acts; consequently, it is not surprising that their intellectual, moral and social advancement is not more rapid. Nay, it is surprising, in view of the injustice meted out to them, that they have done so well. Many bright

examples of intelligence, talent, genius and piety might be cited among their ranks, and these are constantly multiplying.

Every indication of ability, on the part of any of their number, is deserving of special encouragement. Whatever is attempted in poetry or prose, in art or science, in professional or mechanical life, should be viewed with a friendly eye, and criticised in a lenient spirit. To measure them by the same standard as we measure the productions of the favored white inhabitants of the land would be manifestly unjust. The varying circumstances and conditions of life are to be taken strictly into account.

Hence, in reviewing the following Poems, the critic will remember that they are written by one young in years, and identified in complexion and destiny with a depressed and outcast race, and who has had to contend with a thousand disadvantages from earliest life. They certainly are very creditable to her, both in a literary and moral point of view, and indicate the possession of a talent which, if carefully cultivated and properly encouraged, cannot fail to secure for herself a poetic reputation, and to deepen the interest already so extensively felt in the liberation and enfranchisement of the entire colored race. Though Miss WATKINS has never been a slave, she has always resided in a slave State, Baltimore being her native city. A specimen of her prose writings is also appended. A few slight alterations excepted, the work is entirely her own. W. L. G.

BOSTON, August 15, 1854.

POEMS.

THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN.

Joy to my bosom! rest to my fear!
Judea's prophet draweth near!
Joy to my bosom! peace to my heart!
Sickness and sorrow before him depart!

Rack'd with agony and pain,
Writhing, long my child has lain;
Now the prophet draweth near,
All our griefs shall disappear.

"Lord!" she cried with mournful breath,
"Save! Oh, save my child from death!"
But as though she was unheard,
Jesus answered not a word.

With a purpose nought could move,
And the zeal of woman's love,
Down she knelt in anguish wild—
"Master! save, Oh! save my child!"

"'Tis not meet," the Saviour said,
"Thus to waste the children's bread;
I am only sent to seek
Israel's lost and scattered sheep."

"True," she said, "Oh gracious Lord!
True and faithful is thy word:
But the humblest, meanest, may
"Eat the crumbs they cast away."

"Woman," said th' astonish'd Lord,
"Be it even as thy word!
By thy faith that knows no fail,
Thou hast ask'd, and shalt prevail."

THE SLAVE MOTHER.

HEARD you that shriek? It rose
So wildly on the air,
It seemed as if a burden'd heart
Was breaking in despair.

Saw you those hands so sadly clasped—
The bowed and feeble head—
The shuddering of that fragile form—
That look of grief and dread?

Saw you the sad, imploring eye ?
Its every glance was pain,
As if a storm of agony
Were sweeping through the brain.

She is a mother, pale with fear,
Her boy clings to her side,
And in her kirtle vainly tries
His trembling form to hide.

He is not hers, although she bore
For him a mother's pains ;
He is not hers, although her blood
Is coursing through his veins !

He is not hers, for cruel hands
May rudely tear apart
The only wreath of household love
That binds her breaking heart.

His love has been a joyous light
That o'er her pathway smiled,
A fountain gushing ever new,
Amid life's desert wild.

His lightest word has been a tone
Of music round her heart,
Their lives a streamlet blent in one—
Oh, Father ! must they part ?

They tear him from her circling arms,
Her last and fond embrace.
Oh! never more may her sad eyes
Gaze on his mournful face.

No marvel, then, these bitter shrieks
Disturb the listening air:
She is a mother, and her heart
Is breaking in despair.

BIBLE DEFENCE OF SLAVERY.

TAKE sackcloth of the darkest dye,
And shroud the pulpits round!
Servants of Him that cannot lie,
Sit mourning on the ground.

Let holy horror blanch each cheek,
Pale every brow with fears:
And rocks and stones, if ye could speak,
Ye well might melt to tears!

Let sorrow breathe in every tone,
In every strain ye raise;
Insult not God's majestic throne
With th' mockery of praise.

A " reverend" man, whose light should be
The guide of age and youth,
Brings to the shrine of Slavery
The sacrifice of truth!

For the direst wrong by man imposed,
Since Sodom's fearful cry,
The word of life has been unclosed,
To give your God the lie.

Oh! when ye pray for heathen lands,
And plead for their dark shores,
Remember Slavery's cruel hands
Make heathens at your doors!

ELIZA HARRIS.

LIKE a fawn from the arrow, startled and wild,
A woman swept by us, bearing a child;
In her eye was the night of a settled despair,
And her brow was o'ershaded with anguish and care.

She was nearing the river—in reaching the brink,
She heeded no danger, she paused not to think!
For she is a mother—her child is a slave—
And she'll give him his freedom, or find him a grave!

It was a vision to haunt us, that innocent face—
So pale in its aspect, so fair in its grace;
As the tramp of the horse and the bay of the hound,
With the fetters that gall, were trailing the ground!

She was nerv'd by despair, and strengthened by woe,
As she leap'd o'er the chasms that yawn'd from below;
Death howl'd in the tempest, and rav'd in the blast,
But she heard not the sound till the danger was past.

Oh! how shall I speak of my proud country's shame?
Of the stains on her glory, how give them their name?
How say that her banner in mockery waves—
Her "star spangled banner"—o'er millions of slaves?

How say that the lawless may torture and chase
A woman whose crime is the hue of her face?
How the depths of the forest may echo around
With the shrieks of despair, and the bay of the hound?

With her step on the ice, and her arm on her child,
The danger was fearful, the pathway was wild;
But, aided by Heaven, she gained a free shore,
Where the friends of humanity open'd their door.

So fragile and lovely, so fearfully pale,
Like a lily that bends to the breath of the gale,
Save the heave of her breast, and the sway of her hair,
You'd have thought her a statue of fear and despair.

In agony close to her bosom she press'd
The life of her heart, the child of her breast :—
Oh ! love from its tenderness gathering might,
Had strengthen'd her soul for the dangers of flight.

But she's free !—yes, free from the land where the slave
From the hand of oppression must rest in the grave ;
Where bondage and torture, where scourges and chains,
Have plac'd on our banner indelible stains.

The bloodhounds have miss'd the scent of her way ;
The hunter is rifled and foil'd of his prey ;
Fierce jargon and cursing, with clanking of chains,
Make sounds of strange discord on Liberty's plains.

With the rapture love and fulness of bliss,
She plac'd on his brow a mother's fond kiss :—
Oh ! poverty, danger and death she can brave,
For the child of her love is no longer a slave !

ETHIOPIA.

Yes ! Ethiopia yet shall stretch
  Her bleeding hands abroad ;
Her cry of agony shall reach
  The burning throne of God.

The tyrant's yoke from off her neck,
His fetters from her soul,
The mighty hand of God shall break,
And spurn the base control.

Redeemed from dust and freed from chains,
Her sons shall lift their eyes;
From cloud-capt hills and verdant plains
Shall shouts of triumph rise.

Upon her dark, despairing brow,
Shall play a smile of peace;
For God shall bend unto her wo,
And bid her sorrows cease.

'Neath sheltering vines and stately palms
Shall laughing children play,
And aged sires with joyous psalms
Shall gladden every day.

Secure by night, and blest by day,
Shall pass her happy hours;
Nor human tigers hunt for prey
Within her peaceful bowers.

Then, Ethiopia! stretch, oh! stretch
Thy bleeding hands abroad;
Thy cry of agony shall reach
And find redress from God.

THE DRUNKARD'S CHILD.

He stood beside his dying child,
With a dim and bloodshot eye;
They'd won him from the haunts of vice
To see his first-born die.
He came with a slow and staggering tread,
A vague, unmeaning stare,
And, reeling, clasped the clammy hand,
So deathly pale and fair.

In a dark and gloomy chamber,
Life ebbing fast away,
On a coarse and wretched pallet,
The dying sufferer lay:
A smile of recognition
Lit up the glazing eye;
"I'm very glad," it seemed to say,
"You've come to see me die."

That smile reached to his callous heart,
Its sealéd fountains stirred;
He tried to speak, but on his lips
Faltered and died each word.
And burning tears like rain
Poured down his bloated face,
Where guilt, remorse and shame
Had scathed, and left their trace.

"My father!" said the dying child,
(His voice was faint and low,)
"Oh! clasp me closely to your heart,
And kiss me ere I go.
Bright angels beckon me away,
To the holy city fair—
Oh! tell me, father, ere I go,
Say, will you meet me there?"

He clasped him to his throbbing heart,
"I will! I will!" he said;
His pleading ceased—the father held
His first-born and his dead!
The marble brow, with golden curls,
Lay lifeless on his breast;
Like sunbeams on the distant clouds
Which line the gorgeous west.

THE SLAVE AUCTION.

The sale began—young girls were there,
Defenceless in their wretchedness,
Whose stifled sobs of deep despair
Revealed their anguish and distress.

And mothers stood with streaming eyes,
And saw their dearest children sold;
Unheeded rose their bitter cries,
While tyrants bartered them for gold.

And woman, with her love and truth—
For these in sable forms may dwell—
Gaz'd on the husband of her youth,
With anguish none may paint or tell.

And men, whose sole crime was their hue,
The impress of their Maker's hand,
And frail and shrinking children, too,
Were gathered in that mournful band.

Ye who have laid your love to rest,
And wept above their lifeless clay,
Know not the anguish of that breast,
Whose lov'd are rudely torn away.

Ye may not know how desolate
Are bosoms rudely forced to part,
And how a dull and heavy weight
Will press the life-drops from the heart.

THE REVEL.

"He knoweth not that the dead are there."

In yonder halls reclining
Are forms surpassing fair,
And brilliant lights are shining,
But, oh! the dead are there!

There's music, song and dance,
There's banishment of care,
And mirth in every glance,
But, oh! the dead are there!

The wine cup's sparkling glow
Blends with the viands rare,
There's revelry and show,
But still, the dead are there!

'Neath that flow of song and mirth
Runs the current of despair,
But the simple sons of earth
Know not the dead are there!

They'll shudder start and tremble,
They'll weep in wild despair,
When the solemn truth breaks on them,
That the dead, the dead are there!

Wed not a man whose merit lies
In things of outward show,
In raven hair or flashing eyes,
That please your fancy so.

But marry one who's good and kind,
And free from all pretence;
Who, if without a gifted mind,
At least has common sense.

SAVED BY FAITH.

"She said, if I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole."

Life to her no brightness brought,
Pale and striken was her brow,
Till a bright and joyous thought
Lit the darkness of her woe.

Long had sickness on her preyed,
Strength from every nerve had gone;
Skill and art could give no aid:
Thus her weary life passed on.

Like a sad and mournful dream,
Daily felt she life depart,
Hourly knew the vital stream
Left the fountain of her heart.

THAT BLESSED HOPE.

Oh! crush it not, that hope so blest,
Which cheers the fainting heart,
And points it to the coming rest,
Where sorrow has no part.

Tear from my heart each worldly prop,
Unbind each earthly string,
But to this blest and glorious hope,
Oh! let my spirit cling.

It cheer'd amid the days of old
Each holy patriarch's breast;
It was an anchor to their souls,
Upon it let me rest.

When wandering in dens and caves,
In sheep and goat skins dress'd,
A peel'd and scatter'd people learned
To know this hope was blest.

Help me, amidst this world of strife,
To long for Christ to reign,
That when He brings the crown of life,
I may that crown obtain!

THE DYING CHRISTIAN

THE light was faintly streaming
Within a darkened room,
Where a woman, faint and feeble,
Was sinking to the tomb.

The silver cord was loosened,
We knew that she must die;
We read the mournful token
In the dimness of her eye.

We read it in the radiance
That lit her pallid cheek,
And the quivering of the feeble lip,
Too faint its joys to speak.

Like a child oppressed with slumber,
She calmly sank to rest,
With her trust in her Redeemer,
And her head upon His breast.

She faded from our vision,
Like a thing of love and light;
But we feel she lives for ever,
A spirit pure and bright.

REPORT.

I HEARD, my young friend,
You were seeking a wife,
A woman to make
Your companion for life.

Now, if you are seeking
A wife for your youth,
Let this be your aim, then—
Seek a woman of truth.

She may not have talents,
With greatness combined,
Her gifts may be humble,
Of person and mind:

But if she be constant,
And gentle, and true,
Believe me my friend,
She 's the woman for you!

Oh! wed not for beauty,
Though fair is the prize;
It may pall when you grasp it,
And fade in your eyes.

Let gold not allure you,
  Let wealth not attract;
With a house full of treasure,
  A woman may lack.

Let her habits be frugal,
  Her hands not afraid
To work in her household
  Or follow her trade.

Let her language be modest,
  Her actions discreet;
Her manners refined,
  And free from deceit.

Now if such you should find,
  In your journey through life,
Just open your mind,
  And make her your wife.

ADVICE TO THE GIRLS.

NAY, do not blush! I only heard
  You had a mind to marry;
I thought I'd speak a friendly word,
  So just one moment tarry.

He who lull'd the storm to rest,
Cleans'd the lepers, raised the dead,
Whilst a crowd around him press'd,
Near that suffering one did tread.

Nerv'd by blended hope and fear,
Reasoned thus her anxious heart;
"If to touch him I draw near,
All my suffering shall depart.

"While the crowd around him stand,
I will touch," the sufferer said;
Forth she reached her timid hand—
As she touched her sickness fled.

"Who hath touched me?" Jesus cried;
"Virtue from my body's gone."
From the crowd a voice replied,
"Why inquire in such a throng?"

Faint with fear through every limb,
Yet too grateful to deny,
Tremblingly she knelt to him,
"Lord!" she answered, it was I!"

Kindly, gently, Jesus said—
Words like balm unto her soul—
"Peace upon thy life be shed!
Child! thy faith has made thee whole!"

DIED OF STARVATION.

They forced him into prison,
Because he begged for bread;
"My wife is starving—dying!"
In vain the poor man plead.*

They forced him into prison,
Strong bars enclosed the walls,
While the rich and proud were feasting
Within their sumptuous halls.

He'd striven long with anguish,
Had wrestled with despair;
But his weary heart was breaking
'Neath its crushing load of care.

And he prayed them in that prison,
"Oh, let me seek my wife!"
For he knew that want was feeding
On the remnant of her life.

That night his wife lay moaning
Upon her bed in pain;
Hunger gnawing at her vitals,
Fever scorching through her brain.

* See this case, as touchingly related, in "Oliver Twist," by Dickens.

She wondered at his tarrying,
He was not wont to stay;
'Mid hunger, pain and watching,
The moments waned away.

Sadly crouching by the embers,
Her famished children lay;
And she longed to gaze upon them,
As her spirit passed away.

But the embers were too feeble,
She could not see each face,
So she clasped her arms around them—
'Twas their mother's last embrace.

They loosed him from his prison,
As a felon from his chain;
Though his strength was hunger bitten,
He sought his home again.

Just as her spirit linger'd
On Time's receding shore,
She heard his welcome footstep
On the threshold of the door.

He was faint and spirit-broken,
But, rousing from despair,
He clasped her icy fingers,
As she breathed her dying prayer.

With a gentle smile and blessing,
Her spirit winged its flight,
As the morn, in all its glory,
Bathed the world in dazzling light.

There was weeping, bitter weeping,
In the chamber of the dead,
For well the stricken husband knew
She had died for want of bread.

A MOTHER'S HEROISM.

When the noble mother of LOVEJOY heard of her son's death, she said, "It is well! I had rather he should die so than desert his principles."

THE murmurs of a distant strife
Fell on a mother's ear;
Her son had yielded up his life,
Mid scenes of wrath and fear.

They told her how he 'd spent his breath
In pleading for the dumb,
And how the glorious martyr wreath
Her child had nobly won.

They told her of his courage high,
Mid brutal force and might;
How he had nerved himself to die,
In battling for the right.

It seemed at if a fearful storm
Swept wildly round her soul;
A moment, and her fragile form
Bent 'neath its fierce control.

From lip and brow the color fled—
But light flashed to her eye:
"'T is well! 't is well!" the mother said,
"That thus my child should die.

"'T is well that, to his latest breath,
He plead for liberty;
Truth nerved him for the hour of death,
And taught him how to die.

"It taught him how to cast aside
Earth's honors and renown;
To trample on her fame and pride,
And win a martyr's crown."

THE FUGITIVE'S WIFE.

It was my sad and weary lot
To toil in slavery;
But one thing cheered my lowly cot—
My husband was with me.

One evening, as our children played
Around our cabin door,
I noticed on his brow a shade
I'd never seen before;

And in his eyes a gloomy night
Of anguish and despair;—
I gazed upon their troubled light,
To read the meaning there.

He strained me to his heaving heart—
My own beat wild with fear;
I knew not, but I sadly felt
There must be evil near.

He vainly strove to cast aside
The tears that fell like rain:—
Too frail, indeed, is manly pride,
To strive with grief and pain.

Next came a sad procession,
With many a sob and tear;
A widow'd, childless mother
Totter'd by an humble bier.

The vision quickly faded,
The sad, unwelcome sight;
But his lip forgot its laughter,
And his eye its careless light.

A moment, and the flood-gates
Of memory opened wide;
And remorseful recollection
Flowed like a lava tide.

That widow's wail of anguish
Seemed strangely blending there,
And mid the soft lights floated
That image of despair.

* * * *

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

He came—a wanderer; years of sin
Had blanched his blooming cheek,
Telling a tale of strife within,
That words might vainly speak.

His feet were bare, his garments torn,
His brow was deathly white;
His heart was bleeding, crushed and worn,
His soul had felt a blight.

His father saw him; pity swept
And yearn'd through every vein;
He ran and clasp'd his child, and wept,
Murm'ring, "He lives again!"

"Father, I've come, but not to claim
Aught from thy love or grace;
I come, a child of guilt and shame,
To beg a servant's place."

"Enough! enough!" the father said,
"Bring robes of princely cost!"—
The past with all its shadows fled,
For now was found the lost.

"Put shoes upon my poor child's feet,
With rings his hand adorn,
And bid my house his coming greet
With music, dance and song."

Oh! Saviour, mid this world of strife,
When wayward here we roam,
Conduct us to the paths of life,
And guide us safely home.

Then in thy holy courts above,
Thy praise our lips shall sound,
While angels join our song of love,
That we, the lost are found!

EVA'S FAREWELL.

FAREWELL, father! I am a dying,
Going to the "glory land,"
Where the sun is ever shining,
And the zephyr's ever bland.

Where the living fountains flowing,
Quench the pining spirit's thirst;
Where the tree of life is growing,
Where the crystal fountains burst.

Father! hear that music holy
Floating from the spirit land!
At the pearly gates of glory,
Radiant angels waiting stand.

Father! kiss your dearest Eva,
Press her cold and clammy hand,
Ere the glittering hosts receive her,
Welcome to their cherub band.

THE TENNESSEE HERO.

"He had heard his comrades plotting to obtain their liberty, and rather than betray them he received 750 lashes and died."

He stood before the savage throng,
The base and coward crew;
A tameless light flashed from his eye,
His heart beat firm and true.

He was the hero of his band,
The noblest of them all;
Though fetters galled his weary limbs,
His spirit spurned their thrall.

And towered, in its manly might,
Above the murderous crew.
Oh! liberty had nerved his heart,
And every pulse beat true.

"Now tell us," said the savage troop,
"And life thy gain shall be!
Who are the men that plotting, say—
'They must and will be free!'"

Oh, could you have seen the hero then,
As his lofty soul arose,
And his dauntless eyes defiance flashed
On his mean and craven foes!

"I know the men who would be free;
They are the heroes of your land;
But death and torture I defy,
Ere I betray that band.

And what! oh, what is life to me,
Beneath your base control?
Nay! do your worst. Ye have no chains
To bind my free-born soul."

They brought the hateful lash and scourge,
With murder in each eye.
But a solemn vow was on his lips—
He had resolved to die.

Yes, rather than betray his trust,
He 'd meet a death of pain;
'T was sweeter far to meet it thus
Than wear a treason stain!

Like storms of wrath, of hate and pain,
The blows rained thick and fast;
But the monarch soul kept true
Till the gates of life were past.

And the martyr spirit fled
To the throne of God on high,
And showed his gaping wounds
Before the unslumbering eye.

FREE LABOR.

I wear an easy garment,
O'er it no toiling slave
Wept tears of hopeless anguish,
In his passage to the grave.

And from its ample folds
Shall rise no cry to God,
Upon its warp and woof shall be
No stain of tears and blood.

Oh, lightly shall it press my form,
Unladened with a sigh,
I shall not 'mid its rustling hear,
Some sad despairing cry.

This fabric is too light to bear
The weight of bondsmen's tears,
I shall not in its texture trace
The agony of years.

Too light to bear a smother'd sigh,
From some lorn woman's heart,
Whose only wreath of household love
Is rudely torn apart.

Then lightly shall it press my form,
Unburden'd by a sigh ;
And from its seams and folds shall rise,
No voice to pierce the sky,

And witness at the throne of God,
In language deep and strong,
That I have nerv'd Oppression's hand,
For deeds of guilt and wrong.

LINES.

At the Portals of the Future,
Full of madness, guilt and gloom,
Stood the hateful form of Slavery,
Crying, Give, Oh ! give me room—

Room to smite the earth with cursing,
Room to scatter, rend and slay,
From the trembling mother's bosom
Room to tear her child away ;

Room to trample on the manhood
Of the country far and wide ;
Room to spread o'er every Eden
Slavery's scorching lava-tide

Pale and trembling stood the Future,
Quailing 'neath his frown of hate,
As he grasped with bloody clutches
The great keys of Doom and Fate.

In his hand he held a banner
All festooned with blood and tears :
'Twas a fearful ensign, woven
With the grief and wrong of years.

On his brow he wore a helmet
Decked with strange and cruel art;
Every jewel was a life-drop
Wrung from some poor broken heart.

Though her cheek was pale and anxious,
Yet, with look and brow sublime,
By the pale and trembling Future
Stood the Crisis of our time.

And from many a throbbing bosom
Came the words in fear and gloom,
Tell us, Oh ! thou coming Crisis,
What shall be our country's doom ?

Shall the wings of dark destruction
Brood and hover o'er our land,
Till we trace the steps of ruin
By their blight, from strand to strand ?

With a look and voice prophetic
Spake the solemn Crisis then :
I have only mapped the future
For the erring sons of men.

If ye strive for Truth and Justice,
If ye battle for the Right,
Ye shall lay your hands all strengthened
On God's robe of love and light ;

But if ye trample on His children,
To his ear will float each groan,
Jar the cords that bind them to Him,
And they 'll vibrate at his throne.

And the land that forges fetters,
Binds the weak and poor in chains,
Must in blood or tears of sorrow
Wash away her guilty stains.

THE DISMISSAL OF TYNG.

" We have but three words to say, ' served him right.' "
Church Journal (Episcopa

SERVED him right ! How could he dare
To touch the idol of our day ?
What if its shrine be red with blood ?
Why, let him turn his eyes away.

Who dares dispute our right to bind
With galling chains the weak and poor?
To starve and crush the deathless mind,
Or hunt the slave from door to door?

Who dares dispute our right to sell
The mother from her weeping child?
To hush with ruthless stripes and blows
Her shricks and sobs of anguish wild?

'Tis right to plead for heathen lands,
To send the Bible to their shores,
And then to make, for power and pelf,
A race of heathens at our doors.

What holy horror filled our hearts—
It shook our church from dome to nave—
Our cheeks grew pale with pious dread,
To hear him breathe the name of slave.

Upon our Zion, fair and strong,
His words fell like a fearful blight;
We turned him from our saintly fold;
And this we did to "serve him right."

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY is a system claiming God for is author, and the welfare of man for its object. It is a system so uniform, exalted and pure, that the loftiest intellects have acknowledged its influence, and acquiesced in the justness of its claims. Genius has bent from his erratic course to gather fire from her altars, and pathos from the agony of Gethsemane and the sufferings of Calvary. Philosophy and science have paused amid their speculative researches and wondrous revelations, to gain wisdom from her teachings and knowledge from her precepts. Poetry has culled her fairest flowers and wreathed her softest, to bind her Author's "bleeding brow." Music has strung her sweetest lyres and breathed her noblest strains to celebrate His fame; whilst Learning has bent from her lofty heights to bow at the lowly cross. The constant friend of man, she has stood by him in his hour of greatest need. She has cheered the prisoner in his cell, and strengthened the martyr at the stake. She has nerved the frail and shrinking heart of woman for high and holy deeds. The worn

and weary have rested their fainting heads upon her bosom, and gathered strength from her words and courage from her counsels. She has been the staff of decrepit age, and the joy of manhood in its strength. She has bent over the form of lovely childhood, and suffered it to have a place in the Redeemer's arms. She has stood by the bed of the dying, and unveiled the glories of eternal life; gilding the darkness of the tomb with the glory of the resurrection.

Christianity has changed the moral aspect of nations. Idolatrous temples have crumbled at her touch, and guilt owned its deformity in her presence. The darkest habitations of earth have been irradiated with heavenly light, and the death-shriek of immolated victims changed for ascriptions of praise to God and the Lamb. Envy and Malice have been rebuked by her contented look, and fretful Impatience by her gentle and resigned manner.

At her approach, fetters have been broken, and men have risen redeemed from dust, and freed from chains. Manhood has learned its dignity and worth; its kindred with angels, and alliance to God.

To man, guilty, fallen and degraded man, she shows a fountain drawn from the Redeemer's veins; there she bids him wash and be clean. She points him to "Mount Zion, the city of the living God, to

an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant," and urges him to rise from the degradation of sin, renew his nature, and join with them. She shows a pattern so spotless and holy, so elevated and pure, that he might shrink from it discouraged, did she not bring with her a promise from the lips of Jehovah, that he would give power to the faint, and might to those who have no strength. Learning may bring her ample pages and her ponderous records, rich with the spoils of every age, gathered from every land, and gleaned from every source. Philosophy and science may bring their abstruse researches and wondrous revelations—Literature her elegance, with the toils of the pen, and the labors of the pencil—but they are idle tales compared to the truths of Christianity. They may cultivate the intellect, enlighten the understanding, give scope to the imagination, and refine the sensibilities; but they open not, to our dim eyes and longing vision, the land of crystal founts and deathless flowers. Philosophy searches earth; Religion opens heaven. Philosophy doubts and trembles at the portals of eternity; Religion lifts the veil, and shows us golden streets, lit by the Redeemer's countenance, and irradiated by his smile. Philosophy strives to reconcile us to death; Religion triumphs over it.

Philosophy treads amid the pathway of stars, and stands a delighted listener to the music of the spheres; but Religion gazes on the glorious palaces of God, while the harpings of the blood-washed, and the songs of the redeemed, fall upon her ravished ear. Philosophy has her place; Religion her important sphere; one is of importance here, the other of infinite and vital importance, both here and hereafter.

Amid ancient lore the Word of God stands unique and pre-eminent. Wonderful in its construction, admirable in its adaptation, it contains truths that a child may comprehend, and mysteries into which angels desire to look. It is in harmony with that adaptation of means to ends which pervades creation, from the polypus tribes, elaborating their coral homes, to man, the wondrous work of God. It forms the brightest link of that glorious chain which unites the humblest work of creation with the throne of the infinite and eternal Jehovah. As light, with its infinite particles and curiously-blended colors, is suited to an eye prepared for the alternations of day; as air, with its subtle and invisible essence, is fitted for the delicate organs of respiration; and, in a word, as this material world is adapted to man's physical nature; so the word of eternal truth is adapted to

his moral nature and mental constitution. It finds him wounded, sick and suffering, and points him to the balm of Gilead and the Physician of souls. It finds him stained by transgression and defiled with guilt, and directs him to the "blood that cleanseth from all unrighteousness and sin." It finds him athirst and faint, pining amid the deserts of life, and shows him the wells of salvation and the rivers of life. It addresses itself to his moral and spiritual nature, makes provision for his wants and weaknesses, and meets his yearnings and aspirations. It is adapted to his mind in its earliest stages of progression, and its highest state of intellectuality. It provides light for his darkness, joy for his anguish, a solace for his woes, balm for his wounds, and heaven for his hopes. It unveils the unseen world, and reveals Him who is the light of creation, and the joy of the universe, reconciled through the death of His Son. It promises the faithful a blessed reünion in a land undimmed with tears, undarkened by sorrow. It affords a truth for the living and a refuge for the dying. Aided by the Holy Spirit, it guides us through life, points out the shoals, the quicksands and hidden rocks which endanger our path, and at last leaves us with the eternal God for our refuge, and his everlasting arms for our protection.

THE COLORED PEOPLE IN AMERICA.

HAVING been placed by a dominant race in circumstances over which we have had no control, we have been the butt of ridicule and the mark of oppression. Identified with a people over whom weary ages of degradation have passed, whatever concerns them, as a race, concerns me. I have noticed among our people a disposition to censure and upbraid each other, a disposition which has its foundation rather, perhaps, in a want of common sympathy and consideration, than mutual hatred, or other unholy passions. Born to an inheritance of misery, nurtured in degradation, and cradled in oppression, with the scorn of the white man upon their souls, his fetters upon their limbs, his scourge upon their flesh, what can be expected from their offspring, but a mournful reäction of that cursed system which spreads its baneful influence over body and soul; which dwarfs the intellect, stunts its development, debases the spirit, and degrades the soul? Place any nation in the same condition which has been our hapless lot, fetter their limbs and degrade their souls, debase their sons and corrupt their daughters, and when the restless yearnings for liberty shall burn through heart and brain—when, tortured by wrong and goaded by oppression, the hearts that would madden with misery, or break

in despair, resolve to break their thrall, and escape from bondage, then let the bay of the bloodhound and the scent of the human tiger be upon their track; —let them feel that, from the ceaseless murmur of the Atlantic to the sullen roar of the Pacific, from the thunders of the rainbow-crowned Niagara to the swollen waters of the Mexican gulf, they have no shelter for their bleeding feet, or resting-place for their defenceless heads;—let them, when nominally free, feel that they have only exchanged the iron yoke of oppression for the galling fetters of a vitiated public opinion;—let prejudice assign them the lowest places and the humblest positions, and make them "hewers of wood and drawers of water;"—let their income be so small that they must from necessity bequeath to their children an inheritance of poverty and a limited education,—and tell me, reviler of our race! censurer of our people! if there is a nation in whose veins runs the purest Caucasian blood, upon whom the same causes would not produce the same effects; whose social condition, intellectual and moral character, would present a more favorable aspect than ours? But there is hope; yes, blessed be God! for our down-trodden and despised race. Public and private schools accommodate our children; and in my own southern home, I see women, whose lot is unremitted labor, saving a pittance from their scanty

wages to defray the expense of learning to read. We have papers edited by colored editors, which we may consider it an honor to possess, and a credit to sustain. We have a church that is extending itself from east to west, from north to south, through poverty and reproach, persecution and pain. We have our faults, our want of union and concentration of purpose; but are there not extenuating circumstances around our darkest faults—palliating excuses for our most egregious errors? and shall we not hope, that the mental and moral aspect which we present is but the first step of a mighty advancement, the faintest corruscations of the day that will dawn with unclouded splendor upon our down-trodden and benighted race, and that ere long we may present to the admiring gaze of those who wish us well, a people to whom knowledge has given power, and righteousness exaltation?

BREATHING THE AIR OF FREEDOM.

NIAGARA FALLS, Sept. 12th, 1856.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I have just returned from Canada to-day. I gave one lecture at Toronto, which was well attended. * * * Well, I have gazed for the first time upon Free Land! And would you believe it, tears sprang to my eyes, and I wept. Oh!

it was a glorious sight to gaze for the first time on a land where a poor slave, flying from our glorious land of liberty (!), would in a moment find his fetters broken, his shackles loosed, and whatever he was in the land of Washington, beneath the shadow of Bunker Hill Monument, or even Plymouth Rock, *here* he becomes "a man and a brother."

I had gazed on Harper's Ferry, or rather the Rock at the Ferry, towering up in simple grandeur with the gentle Potomac gliding peacefully by its feet, and felt that that was God's Masonry; and my soul had expanded in gazing on its sublimity. I had seen the Ocean, singing its wild chorus of sounding waves, and ecstacy had thrilled upon the living chords of my heart. I have since then seen the rainbow-crowned Niagara, girdled with grandeur, and robed with glory, chanting the choral hymn of Omnipotence, but none of the sights have melted me as the first sight of Free Land.

Towering mountains, lifting their hoary summits to catch the first faint flush of day when the sunbeams kiss the shadows from morning's drowsy face, may expand and exalt your soul. The first view of the ocean may fill you with strange ecstacy and delight. Niagara, the great, the glorious Niagara, may hush your spirit with its ceaseless thunder; it may charm you with its robe of crested spray and rainbow crown; but the land of Freedom has a lesson of deeper significance than foaming waves or towering mountains.

It carries the heart back to that heroic struggle for emancipation, in Great Britain, in which the great heart of the people throbbed for liberty, and the mighty pulse of the nation beat for freedom till nearly 800,000 men, women and children arose redeemed from bondage and freed from chains.

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